



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of Frank Liscio IV,
Battalion Fire Chief (PM1102V),
Paterson

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2019-403

ISSUED: October 3, 2018 (RE)

Frank Liscio IV appeals his score on the promotional examination for Battalion Fire Chief (PM1102V), Paterson. It is noted that the appellant passed the examination with a final average of 83.470 and ranked 15th on the eligible list.

This two-part examination consisted of an integrated system of simulations designed to generate behavior similar to that required for success on the job. The first part consisted of multiple-choice items that measured specific work components identified and weighted by the job analysis. The second part consisted of three oral scenarios; a Supervision, Administration and Incident Command scenario. The examination was based on a comprehensive job analysis conducted by the Civil Service Commission, which identified the critical areas of the job. The weighting of the test components was derived from the job analysis data.

For the oral portion, candidates had 60 minutes to prepare for all three scenarios and had 10 minutes per scenario to present their response. For all three oral exercises, the candidate was to assume the role of a Battalion Fire Chief. Candidates were scored based on the content of their response (technical) and the how well they presented their response (oral communication). These components were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating.

Each candidate in a given jurisdiction was scored by a team of three different Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), who were trained in current technical and oral communication scoring procedures. Each SME is a current or retired fire officer who held the title of Battalion Fire Chief (or Fire Officer 2) or higher. As part of the

scoring process, an SME observed and noted the responses of a candidate relative to the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that each exercise was designed to measure. An SME also noted any weaknesses that detracted from the candidates overall oral communication ability. The SME then rated the candidate's performance according to the rating standards and assigned the candidate a technical or oral communication score on that exercise.

In order to preserve the relative weighting of each of the components of the examination, the ratings for each portion were adjusted by a well-recognized statistical process known as "standardization." Under this process, the ratings are standardized by converting the raw scores to z-scores, an expression of the deviation of the score from the mean score of the group in relation to the standard deviation of scores for the group. Each portion of the examination had a relative weight in its relation to the whole examination. Thus, the z-score for the multiple-choice portion was multiplied by a test weight of 36.53%, the oral technical scores were multiplied by a test weight of 53.91% and the oral communication scores were multiplied by a test weight of 9.56%. The weighted z-scores were summed and this became the overall final test score. This was weighted and added to the weighted seniority score. The result was standardized, then normalized, and rounded up to the third decimal place to arrive at a final average.

For the technical and oral communication components of the Supervision, Administration and Incident Command scenarios, the appellant received scores of 4, 3, 1 and 5, 5, 3, respectively.

The appellant challenges his score for the technical component of the Administration scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material and a listing of possible courses of action (PCAs) for the scenario were reviewed.

CONCLUSION

The Administration scenario indicated that a fire education program given at an elementary school was inappropriate. The Fire Chief has asked the newly appointed Battalion Fire Chief to investigate the current fire educational program and update it if necessary. Question 1 asked for specific steps to be taken to investigate whether the program is effective and meeting the needs of the intended audience. Question 2 indicated that the candidate found that the program was not meeting its goal, and the Fire Chief asks for it to be updated to reflect current practices and so that it is tailored to specific audiences. It asked who should provide input to ensure that the fire educational program is up to date and serves the intended audience.

For this question, the SME noted that the appellant missed the opportunities to interview Fire Department personnel who teach the program (question 1), and to seek input from the legal department (question 2). On appeal, the appellant states that

he said he would gather input from past fire safety programs, and gather information from the fire training division. He states that in response to question 2 he included the fire training division, the fire prevention division, and past programs.

In reply, the instructions in the scenario tell candidates to be as specific as possible and not to assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to a score. This was a formal examination setting, and candidates were required to specifically state the actions that they would take in response to the questions. The appellant stated that he would review past programs, including those from other departments, but he did not indicate that he would gather input from past programs. In this case, the appellant did not indicate that he would interview the personnel who teach the program. If the appellant was aware that he would conduct these interviews, he was to indicate that verbally in his response, but he cannot receive credit on the assumption that he would have done so by gathering information from the fire training division, or for his response to question 2. The personnel doing the training may not be from the fire training division, and information could be documents rather than interviews. The appellant's response was not specific enough to warrant credit for this action. The appellant missed the actions noted by the SME and his score for this component will not be changed.

A thorough review of appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 3rd DAY OF OCTOBER, 2018



Deirdre L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Christopher S. Myers
Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P. O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Frank Liscio IV
Michael Johnson
Records Center